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*(This is the last of two articles by Mr. Mangaoang, business agent of Local 7-C, International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union. The first on Filipinos in the U. S., appeared in last week's Our World section.)*

#### SEATTLE

**T**HE Filipino people's tradition of resistance and struggle against oppressors dates back more than 300 years to the beginning of the Spanish conquest. Today that struggle continues both in the homeland, where the Hukbalahap number 16 million of the Islands' 18 million people, and in the United States, where Filipino-Americans fight for an end to bitter economic, social and political suppression.

The first Spaniards to settle in the Philippines, in the early 16th century, grabbed the land and imposed feudal serfdom upon the native peoples.

At once a long struggle for independence was initiated, a battle out of which many brilliant leaders were developed, including the gifted Jose Rizal, world-famous surgeon and political writer who was executed by the Spaniards.

By 1896 the Filipinos had practically won through to independence and established a republic. Spanish occupation had dwindled to a few puny garrisons. But the United States, then establishing its so-called "Open Door" policy in Japan and attempting to grab markets in China, needed the Philippine Islands as an outpost from which to launch its predatory campaigns.

By sheer superiority of arms, the U. S. attacked and conquered the young republic in 1898, a conquest described by most U. S. historians as "the liberation of the Philippines from Spanish domination."

Under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo, the Filipinos resisted fiercely for two years before the U. S. assumed power, and throughout the U. S. administration there was resistance from the pagan and Mohammedan tribes and the tenants of the U. S.-supported Spanish landlords.

The Islands' economy had always been agricultural, and after the U. S. conquest rice, sugar, tobacco, hemp and copra became the principal crops. Exploitation of gold and copper mines and the cutting of large stands of hardwood timber was commenced. Little industry was permitted to develop. Following the colonial pattern,



Hukbalahap guerrilla fighters during Japan's occupation of the Philippines. Inset, Emilio Aguinaldo, leader of the fight against U. S. occupation.

## The Filipinos —A Force For Peace

BY ERNESTO  
MANGAOANG

natural resources were taken out of the Islands while manufactured commodities were shipped in by the U. S.

In 1934 an uneasy peace was established when the Filipinos were promised independence effective in 1944. In the former year a Filipino government was set up, but despite limited native participation, control lay in the hands of the rich landlords. Over the whole government was placed a U. S. resident commissioner appointed by the oppressor government overseas.

**U**NDER the leadership of Abad Santos, there began in about 1915 the consolidation of the many isolated Peasant Unions which had come into existence during the period of resistance to U. S. domination. The home federation demanded a greater share of the products of the land for the peasants, and ultimately called for seizure of the land itself. The protégé and disciple of Santos was the young peasant, Luis Taruc, who fought in the International Brigade in Spain and returned to his homeland to lead its Communist party and the peasant resistance movement.

It was the Peasant Unions—the Hukbalahap—largely under Taruc's leadership, that during World War II formed the bulk of the guerrilla fighters against the Japanese occupation.

As the Japanese invaded, the landlords fled to the cities and bobnobbed with the occupiers. The peasants rejected the Japanese offer of "peace" and instead seized the lands as their own, waging continuous guerrilla warfare.

When Gen. Douglas MacArthur as-

sumedly declared that "I have returned" upon his re-entry into Manila, he "forgot" to mention that he was accompanied by an army made up in large part of Filipinos from the U. S. mainland; that the Japanese had been greatly weakened by the Huk guerrillas; and that when the U. S. Army drove out the Japanese the guerrillas gave invaluable coordinated support in a whole series of campaigns.

After the defeat of the Japanese invaders, the former landlords, supported by the bayonets of the so-called U. S. "Army of Liberation," attempted to return to the lands they had abandoned. The Huks were ordered to surrender their arms. They refused and the fighting began again.

Meanwhile, the Philippine government-in-exile had returned. In 1946 independence was declared and Taruc and other resistance leaders entered the political scene. But the Japanese collaborator, Manuel Roxas, supported by U. S. imperialism, was "elected" president in an extremely complex campaign in which terrorist methods and duplicity prevailed. A handful of Huk senators and representatives, including Taruc, were deprived of their seats through fraud. A price was placed on Taruc's head. Roxas died, but another Japanese collaborator, Elpidio Quirino, took his place. The government rapidly degenerated into representatives of wealthy landlords and U. S. Big Business, supported in office by U. S. troops.

Then followed an era of crime and corruption in government equalled only by that of the Chiang Kai-shek regime in China. The puppet gang in Manila has criminally squandered \$2 billion sent by the U. S. supposedly for rehabilitation.

**T**HE Philippine Islands today is an armed camp. The Quirino government's attempt to restore the land to the prewar landowners is a failure. Since the war ended an additional three million peasants have joined the ranks of the Huks. Only the ex-landlords, wealthy businessmen, some of the civil servants and professionals, and the backward tribes living in relative isolation are not numbered among the supporters of the Hukbalahap.

Everybody knows that the Huks could occupy any part of the Islands; but because of U. S. military installa-

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# *The Filipinos*

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Now they could not hope to hold many such key strongholds. The number and size of U. S. military installations and bases has grown sharply in line with the basic program of U. S. imperialism in the Philippines—to stop the resistance of the native population in order to maintain bases for the invasion of Asia and launching of World War III.

Thus, the Filipino resistance movement stands directly in the path of U. S. imperialism. It stands firmly and courageously in the forefront of the vast peace forces of the world today.

DAILY PEOPLE'S WORLD

August 24, 1951

## SEATTLE

**I**T was the "promised land," they were told. And 60,000 of them came to its shores in six short years. Today there are but 20,000, and the story of their oppression in the U. S. is equalled only by that accorded the Negroes and the Indians.

Spaniards first brought Filipino workers to Louisiana to toil on the sugar plantations more than 150 years ago. But the first migration of modern times occurred in 1915, with the dispatch of Filipinos to Hawaii under labor contract.

It was not until 1924 that Filipinos began to come to the U. S. mainland in any considerable numbers. The movement continued until 1930. Included were older men who came for jobs and high school youths who came as students to the universities.

Most of the young people, unable to complete their schooling for lack of funds, remained to become workers. Few women emigrated from the Philippines, due both to the brutal conditions which confronted Filipinos in the U. S. and to the reluctance of Filipino families to permit their daughters to leave the home.

Spurred by extreme poverty at home and lured by the extravagant promises of U. S. agents seeking cheap labor, the Filipino worker raised money for his steamship fare often through mortgaging the small landholding of his family. It was confidently expected the favored son would soon return, pockets laden with U. S. dollars, to redeem the land and pay the fare to the U. S. of younger sons.

Reality was tragically different. On the West Coast the immigrants were jammed into the slum areas of the larger cities. penniless, they were quickly recruited by grafting labor contractors and herded into the agricultural areas. Most of the thousands of students also were ultimately forced into labor in the fields.

A handful of immigrants, in contact with criminal elements in the city slums, became gamblers and petty crooks, preying upon their own people. From these elements the giant salmon canning and agricultural industries drew their labor contractors.

**M**OST Filipino-Americans today are migratory workers, following a well-defined seasonal circuit beginning in the spring with the pruning of fruit trees and gathering the asparagus crop in California. From May to September they travel to Seattle, where they are dispatched to Alaska to work in the salmon canneries. In the fall they return to Oregon and Washington to pick apples, hops and beets, then back to California for peaches, grapes and tomatoes. In the winter they travel to the Imperial Valley of Southern California and Arizona for lettuce and other truck garden produce.

The circuit of work the year around is not common to each individual worker, however. It is but the general trend; few are so fortunate as to find such ideal continuous employment.

Other Filipino workers are found in the Rocky Mountain states, working in the sugar beet plantations, while others find unskilled jobs in sawmills, on railroads, in steel mills, restaurants and the merchant marine. Many small farms are owned by Filipino-Americans, or operated by them as tenant farmers. There are but a handful of professionals, who have doggedly fought to secure an education.

Where Filipino-American urban communities are stable, fraternal organizations, veterans posts, church groups and community newspapers are established. But since the vast majority is employed as migratory workers, it is in the "factories in the fields" and the salmon canneries that most typical conditions are found.

One characteristic flowing from the oppression by the white majority is the virtually complete isolation of these workers from U. S. life. After 20 to 25 years in this country, many older workers still speak only in their island dialect.

In agricultural areas they (including wives and children) live in crowded labor camps or decrepit, unsanitary barns. They work from sun-up to sun-down of the long summer days at from



## U.S. FILIPINOS—A DREAM DEFERRED

There were lavish promises and high hope. And 60,000 gave in to the lure of the 'promised land.' Many less remain—they in oppression alleviated only where there is unionization

BY ERNEST MANGAOANG



In the U.S. and in Hawaii, Filipinos have carried on militant union battles. Photos show (top) 1948 demonstration in Stockton, Calif., by asparagus strikers, most of them Filipinos, and picket line during 1949 ILWU strike in Hawaii, where Filipinos also played leading role.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

(Ernest Mangaoang, business agent of International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Local 7-C in Seattle, was a key figure in the organization of Alaska salmon cannery workers in the 1930s. His militant leadership has brought a series of ruthless deportation moves from the Immigration Service. He was one of the first victims of the McCarran Act, serving 88 days in King County jail last year.)

In next week's *Our World*, Mr. Mangaoang will deal with the Filipinos in their homeland, including an account of the Hukbalahaps.)

65 to 85 cents an hour. Fed by scheming labor contractors, they suffer from undernourishment. Housed under incredibly foul conditions and weakened by endless hours of back-breaking stoop labor, they are prey to tuberculosis and other diseases of poverty. They are additionally victimized by seasonal unemployment.

**F**ACED with incredible oppression, the Filipino migratory workers have resisted exploitation in this country with the same tenacious courage exhibited in their homeland. After many bitter failures, the first success in organization came in 1934 when, under the momentum of the CIO organizing campaigns, workers of the

Alaska salmon industry, mostly Filipino-Americans, formed a strong union.

Prior to organizing, these workers earned \$30 a month during a three- to four-month season for which they worked 12 hours a day without overtime. They were fed on fish heads and rice by the labor contractors. Hiring was controlled by these gangster contractors, agents of the monopoly Alaska Salmon Industry, who made the workers "kick back" for their jobs.

The fight to build a union became a savage battle to eliminate the hated agents of the industry, the contractors. That struggle was won. Local 7-C of the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union today is one of the strongest of the progressive bloc of unions.

Cannery workers now earn \$250 to \$300 a month in Alaska for an eight-hour day, plus overtime. Tremendous improvements in living and working conditions have been won. A union hiring hall has broken the labor contractors' stranglehold. For years the workers have been fighting to preserve this union against the multifold weapons of the employers, the government the latter control, and the boss agents in the labor movement. Company unions, AFL and CIO raiding attacks, threats of deportation and other devices have thus far been defeated by the unity and determination of the rank and file.

Perhaps the sharpest and most dangerous attack on the union is that launched by the Truman Administration's Justice Department and Immigration Service, an attack that is part and parcel of the campaign to wipe out labor's rights and the Bill of Rights itself.

Hundreds of union members have been hounded, grilled and investigated by Immigration agents. Citizens and those seeking citizenship are subjected to a literal reign of terror in an attempt to recruit stool pigeons. Nine union leaders and militant members were arrested and held for deportation.

This local union was also among the first victims of the anti-labor McCarran Act, but through court action and public protest those arrested have been released.

**I**N a period when most of the corrupt leadership of the trade union movement is engaged in fratricidal raiding, organization among the Filipino-American workers continues to progress. The Alaska salmon industry is organized almost 100 percent. Stubborn organizing drives in California asparagus fields have led to unionization of 1000 workers by the Distributive, Processing & Office Workers of America. While the bulk of these workers remain unorganized, even partial organization has improved the wages and conditions in the asparagus industry generally.

In addition to these union members, some 5000 Filipino-Americans are organized in the AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhood and independent unions of other industries.

Thirty-five thousand Filipino sugar and pineapple workers in Hawaii are organized under the banner of the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, which has raised wages from the starvation level of 50 cents a day to a minimum of 80 cents an hour.

These significant economic gains won by the Filipino-American minority through their trade unions are a serious threat to the profits of the huge corporate farm and salmon industries of Wall Street. Just as organized Filipinos in the Islands—the Hukbalahap—stand squarely across the path of Wall Street's imperialist plans for expansion and domination in Asia, so organized Filipino-Americans on the mainland threaten the whole Big Business scheme of super-exploitation in the agricultural areas at home.

Unions such as Local 7-C and the organized asparagus workers in DPOW Local 78 affect other sections of agricultural migratory workers, including the Mexican-Americans, Mexicans and other Latin-Americans.

The close cultural link between these people and the Filipino-Americans, because of their common history of resistance against the Spanish oppressors, is strengthened by the common resistance of these peoples to U. S. imperialism, the most savagely dangerous in the whole world-wide range of bloody tyrannies.

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